

Presentation to Friends of Abingdon Civic Society meeting by Oxfordshire County Councillor Alison Rooke – 12 February 2020

Oxford-Cambridge Expressway

- The timing and next steps regarding the proposed Expressway are currently unknown. Previously, it was expected that consultation on route options between Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes would take place in 2019. However, prior to the general election the transport secretary indicated that the project scope may be reviewed and a further announcement is awaited from the new government.
- Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the Oxfordshire District Councils have all voted to oppose the Expressway.
- Further information on the project and work undertaken to date is available at the Highways England Website and any new announcements will be published there
<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway/>
(There is the option to sign up for updates)

A34 congestion and safety

- Highways England have recently carried out a safety review of the A34, which Oxfordshire County Council understands made a number of recommendations. They are expecting feedback from Highways England “imminently”.

Lodge Hill interchange

- A project team at OCC has been working with consultants at AECOM, and is in close liaison with Highways England, in relation to design refinement and carrying out of surveys etc. Officers will soon be organising a public engagement event to provide updates on scheme progress, this is likely to be in April. In advance of this, here is a brief update:
- All the land parcels to deliver this scheme have been identified and negotiations with landowners have been concluded, subject to legal documentation.
- Ground investigation and drainage surveys on the A34 are booked for March 2020, to help inform subsequent stages of design.
- Public exhibition to be held Spring 2020, likely April.
- Planning application submission currently planned June 2020.
- Construction start currently planned July 2021
- Construction completed currently planned May 2022

Although the scheme is being promoted and delivered by OCC, it has to be signed off by Highways England as it is on their Strategic Road Network. There are still various approval stages required, which the project team are working towards. These approvals have been the cause of many of the delays; OCC is working closely with Highways England. Although the scheme completion date has slipped, it is still predominantly in line with the planned housing delivery, as the housing sites have also not progressed as quickly as the developers previously hoped.

Town centre traffic congestion

As mentioned in Lodge Hill update above we are liaising with Highways England on the design of Lodge Hill Slips to satisfy their requirements for the Strategic Road Network. This new interchange will provide an alternative access point onto the A34 for vehicles wishing to travel to/from the south on the A34. This will ultimately redistribute traffic within Abingdon and should reduce the number of vehicles having to travel through Abingdon to reach Marcham Interchange. So over time, it is hoped that less traffic will use Colwell Drive/McDonald's roundabout to access the A34 at Marcham, thus freeing up capacity for traffic in the town centre and critical junctions within the town such as the double mini roundabouts.

Bus services

- X3 and X13: we understand Oxford Bus Company intend to reinstate these connections upon completion of long term roadworks in Oxford. They will give us about two months notice before they make this change, which they have not done to date.
- Discussions are in hand re a possible service to/from Oxford along Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive when the new developments are built
- We are unaware of any forthcoming changes to bus services within Abingdon. The local town route 41 is a Town Council contract: its operating hours have recently been extended and no other changes are planned at present.

Better services for pedestrians and cyclists

In terms of pedestrians and cyclists we are hoping to utilise budget over the coming years to look at measures to aid and encourage walking and cycling across Abingdon. We will also work with new developers in the area to improve routes from their sites to key facilities within the town. In the future there should be the opportunity to request CIL contributions towards pedestrians and cycle measures and will involve OCC working with the Vale of White Horse District Council.

Across the four main housing sites in the North Abingdon area, a significant amount of well-connected cycling infrastructure (new, or improving existing) was secured at the planning stage and will provide good-quality routes all the way to Oxford.

Councillor Rooke also answered questions on matters such as potholes and overgrown cycle and footpaths. She reminded us that the “Fix My Street” service is the most effective way to get problems resolved – report them via <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>